

A
SERMON,

Occasionally Preached

ON THE
FUNERAL

Of our late Sovereign

WILLIAM the III.

King of *England, Scotland, France and Ireland;*

Who was solemnly Interr'd in *Henry the 7th.*
Chappel in the *Abby of Westminster.* on *Sunday April*
the 12. 1702

By *William Bentley. D. D.*

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A

Funeral Sermon

On the Death of the late

King *WILLIAM*, &c.

PSA L. xlii. II.

Why art thou cast down, oh my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God.

IT is the usual Method of Divine Providence, to Chequer our Lives with Black and White; to allot us frequent vicissitudes of Grief and Joy, which succeed each other like Night and Day; and by thus varying our Prospect effectually, to take care that we neither grow too fond of this World, nor be too much disturbed at its Crosses. Were it not for this Wise diversity of Dispensations, we should be apt to *sink heavily* in a storm of *Adversity*, or *drive too lightly* before a Gail of *Prosperity*; we shou'd find it very difficult to steer rightly in the Extreames of either Condition; or at least to manage the Helm with that steadiness and gravi-

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ty as becomes us as *Men* and *Christians*: therefore as the Preacher tells us, lest we should be swallowed up of overmuch Sorrow our Afflictions are always sweetned with some comfortable Considerations, and our Blessings mixed with some melancholy Reflections, to prevent our Conceited and Ambitious Exaltations.

These are the standing Maxims of God's unerring Wisdom, by which he acts in the general Government of the World; and agreeable to these Measures has he now proceeded in that particular Scene of Providence which lies before us: That surprizing Calamity under which we labour, by the unexpected Death of the best of Kings, it being mitigated, and made tolerable, by the Happiness we expect under the auspicious Influence of so excellent a Queen; and those transports of Joy on the other side cannot but be moderated in some degree by a sense of this great Loss we have so freshly sustained. I have therefore endeavoured to suite my Text to the differing Circumstances of the present Occasion, which invites us at once, to Condole and Congratulate: First, To attend the going down of our setting Sun, with that decent Heaviness which becomes such a Night; and then refresh our selves in the Rays of the Rising Sun, with that solemn Joy which is due to such a Morning. The former of these Reflections will inform us of the Occasion why our Souls are cast down, and the latter will acquaint us with the just Reason which we have to hope yet in God, and resolve to Praise him who is the Health of our Conscience.

I shall therefore divide my Discourse in these two following Propositions.

1. I shall enquire into the just Cause we have to mourn for the Affliction laid upon us in the loss of a King to whom we owe so much. And,

2^{dly}, Examine the Obligation we lie under to rejoice and be thankful for the Blessings afforded us in Possession of a Queen, from whom we justly expect so much.

First, It is natural upon any just occasion of sorrow to proportion our Grief, if we are duly affected, either to the true value of its Object, or to the greatness of those Advantages which we reaped from its Enjoyment: If then we will be guided by these equitable Measures, and apply them to the present Instance, we shall find our selves obliged to mourn deeply for the Loss of so excellent a Prince, and in order to justify our Sorrow, let us consider how valuable he was in himself, and what vast Benefits he has imparted to us.

Our late Sovereign of blessed Memory, might justly claim that Character which all Kings pretend (how few of them soever do study to deserve it) of being God's Vicegerents upon Earth, who take pleasure in delivering the Oppressed, and doing good to Men: A Prince that had certainly in him true Elevations of Greatness, happily tempered with Bowels of Compassion and good Nature; He was one that really aimed at the Welfare of his Subjects, and truly desired that Peace, Love, and Unity might be established amongst them, as is evident from the first Speech that he made from the Throne.

Throne, to the last that he made to his Parliament.

He had not only a sincere Desire, but he had also an Ability to manage our publick Affairs, in Times of Peace, and gave the World undeniable Proofs that he was a Prince of singular Conduct and Courage, to lead our Armies in time of War; and was look'd upon, (as to martial Exploites) as the most considerable Prince in *Europe*, being esteemed as the Life and Soul of the whole Alliance, and has all along been the main Instrument (under God) to check the exorbitant Power of *France*.

This is the King which we have lost, the King that sinful *England* these Thirteen Years has been bless'd with; the Man by whom Heaven has imparted so many signal Mercies, not only to us, but to the greatest part of *Europe*: A King that was not only in Name but indeed and in Truth, a real Defender of the Christian Faith, in its Innocent Purity and Perfections; A King, not only pious and Religious, but declin'd no dangers abroad, nor struggling difficulties at home, to make our Nation happy and glorious: And indeed Great *Britain* did never in any Age, since we were first a People, appear with so much Glory, nor made so great a Figure, all over the Christian World as we did in the late Reign of this Great and Good King, which God has now depriv'd us of.

This Great Loss may seem more Dreadful, when we consider what a Proud Intreiguing, potent and subtle Adversary we have to deal with; It looks as if the Almighty was angry with us, and as if the Death of this our Sovereign, was the Fore-run-

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ner of some approaching and Impending Calamity to our Nation; Tho indeed, this is not always the Design of Heaven, in removal of such Instruments of Deliverance and preservation from a People; but sometimes such Dispensations of Providence are the happy Passages of God's more immediate Appearance in the behalf of a Nation, in order to make his mighty Power and Glory the more eminently visible in the Destruction of his Enemies; that so men may not look so much at the means of Human Instruments as to forget God, who is the only Giver of Victory and Success. And thus we know He dealt with the Children of *Israel*: For when He had brought them just upon the Skirts of *Canaan*, He first snatch'd away *Aaron*, and suddenly after depriv'd them of the Miracle Working *Moses*; the Man upon whose only Conduct and Courage, they wholly depended, for the Conquering that Countrey to which they were marching. That so they might be convinc'd that it was God only, and not *Moses* and *Aaron*, that made their Army Successful; and that they might thereby learn to depend on the Providence and Power of God, more than their own Strength and Policy; which they would not so easily have done, if those mighty Men who brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, had liv'd till they had been quietly settled in the Land of *Canaan*; But they would have been very apt, as they were afterwards, upon less occasion, to have Idoliz'd their own Nets, and Worship'd their own Dragg. They would certainly have said that the Conduct of *Moses*, and their own mighty Valour had made
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the Conquest, and consequently have forgotten that the most high God is the only General and Lord of Hosts.

This possibly may be the Design of Providence, in the Death of our late Dread Sovereign of Blessed Memory, who was a Prince so famous throughout the whole World for his Sagacity, in unraveling the deep Designs of a crafty and intriguing Enemy; and on whom we so much depended for the humbling of Tyranny, and Establishment of Truth and Virtue, upon a firm, sure and lasting Foundation, by him so nearly perfected. So that had this Mighty Man of Valour, and Darling of the People liv'd, to have been made Successful in Overthrowing Tyrannical Power, and reduc'd France to its just Limits, we should have been too apt, to have esteem'd the King more than a bare Instrument; and not have given unto God the Honour and Glory due to his Name. And therefore that our Success which we so eagerly promised our selves, in the Destruction of our Enemies, may the more evidently appear to be the Work of God, this Potent Prince is taken from us. And perhaps to let the World have another Proof, that the Lord is King for ever, and therefore when he pleases, to make even a Woman his Vice-gerent in a Nation where he can make that People as Successful in War, as they were when govern'd by a Man of the greatest Renown; and for this Reason possibly it is, that the High and Mighty Princess *Anne*, is by the Providence of Heaven advanced to the Imperial Crown of these Kingdoms, that so under the Reign and

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Government of a Woman, the pride and Haughtiness of *France*, to make its Domineering Monarchs all more grating and uneasy, be Providentially reserved for one of the weaker sex, to let that Tyrant know that there is a God that judgeth the Earth, that can use what Instruments he pleases for the Preservation of his People, and the Punishment of his Enemies. And indeed something like this God hath done for *England* already when it flourished above 40 Years under *Queen Elizabeth*; who gave a mortal Blow to the Pride and Power of the then Aspiring *Spaniards*, who were aiming at Universal Empire, and ready to invade us; So our *Ann*, may, (under God) have the lasting honour of putting a full Period to the Ambitious Designs of the House of *Bourbon*.

This I say, may be the Design of God in taking away our late Gracious Monarch from us; tho indeed if we look at our selves and consider the Wickedness of the Nation, we have but little reason to believe that Heaven intends us such a favour by it, but rather that his Death is to us, as the Death of Good *Josiah* was to the *Jews*, a fatal Omen of worse affliction coming; which if it be, we may even thank our selves, and our own Wickedness, and Prophaneness for it; because that notwithstanding all the means and motives that God, and our late King have made use of to Reform us, we refused to amend our ways and our doings, and are still as bad, if not worse than ever.

Job tells us, that *Afflictions* comes not forth from the Dust, neither does troubles spring out of the Ground;

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we must look upwards for the Original of our Calamities, God is indeed the Author of our Punishments, but we must look for the cause of it among our selves. We have had several Instances of God's heavy displeasure, which has all been design'd to our amendment ; and yet hitherto we have not suffered them to have a due Effect upon us. When we grew forgetful of our happy Deliverance, God began to take away some of the chief advantages of it, that we might learn to value our Blessings by the want which we found of them : And first the glorious *Queen Mary* was ravish'd from us at a stroke who was delightful in our Eyes and the Joy of our Hearts ; and tho we mourn'd and lamented for touching an affliction, yet we were but little concerned at those Sins which had occasion'd it : After a Competent attendance for the Effect of this Judgment, God rous'd us again out of our gross Insensibility by depriving us of a Prince, in whom we had treasured up our hopes, and lodg'd our Expectation of future Prosperity ; and yet, how little were we affected with this second Influction ? How far were we from answering Gods Ends in our Correction ? The long suffering of God has waited several Years and we have still doz'd on, in the same stupidity and Impenitency, and therefore he has deservedly given us a startling Blow indeed, which cannot waken us into Repentance, unless the Sleep that has seiz'd us be unto Death : *The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, of whom we said under his Shadow we shall live, is snatch'd away from us* surprizingly and unexpectedly. *The Crown*

our *fallen from our Head, woe unto us that we have sinned*
am. v. 16. Away then with that open Prophan-
 ss and Debauchery, that contempt of God, Re-
 gion, and Sobriety, that Ingratitude for Blessings
 the first Magnitude, and that Murmurings at
 sapointments of small consideration, which are to
 met with in all Ranks and Degrees of Men
 amongst us: Away with these uncharitable Disfen-
 ons and Divisions, those selfish Principles and vio-
 nt Methods; which some in all Parties promote
 with so much heat, as renders the publick Spirit
 and Moderation of others ineffectual.

These are the Traytors which have taken off our
 overaighn; these are the Murtherers of our Bene-
 ctor and Deliverer, and unless these Enemies of
 God and the Nation are brought forth by us, and
 ain before him, we must expect sharper judgments
 than we yet have felt; We shall find that God is
 et incens'd again'st us; *That for all this his anger is*
not turned away, but that his hand is stretch'd out still.

And that is the usual Method that God takes
 with the World, is sufficiently evident to every one
 who has seriously read the Sacred Scriptures, where
 we find the Smiling, or frowning Providence of
 God towards the Children of *Israel* was always ac-
 cording to the virtues or vices of the Generality of
 their Nation. And of this, the Royal Prophet
David gives us a particular Relation as you may
 see in the 78 and in the 106 *Pfalm*, where he rec-
 froons up several Rebellions of the People against the
 Lord their King, and the Judgments where with
 be

he afflicted them for the same. When Vertue and Piety did flourish and abound amongst them, then Har- Plenty and Prosperity was within their Borders with too; but as often as vice and Prophaness became predominant, the Wrath of God was kindled against them; and was so highly displeas'd with their Doings, that he abhorr'd his own Inheritance; He forsook even the Tabernacle of *Shiloh* the Temple which he had placed amongst Men, and either by Sword, by Famine, by Pestilence, or else by some other National Affliction, he most certainly and severely lash'd them for their Sin.

Nor did God only exercise this Providence towards his own People the *Jewes*, but his Dealings were just the same with other Nations too; as we are sufficiently taught by the Examples of *Edom*, *Amon*, *Tyrus*, *Affyria*, *Moab*, and *Midian*, *Canaan*, and *Caldea*, with many other places. And tho' the Almighty is not ty'd to Precedents, yet from these Examples we may with great Probability suppose that as in the Ages of Old, God always bless'd his People while they were obedient to him, and punished them with sharp Judgments when they rebel'd against him; so he will deal with the World new; Because these Dispensations, as to the main substance of them, seemes to be perpetual, and founded on that which can never be changed, even Divine justice, whereby God is, as it were, oblig'd to vindicate the Honour and Holiness of his Law in order to give some Check to the Over-flowing Wickedness; so that when ever Prophaness and Idolatry, is become National, when a People comb

and join together against Heaven, when Hand joins in
 her Hand to do Wickedly, then we may safely foretell,
 without the Spirit of Prophecy that the Scourge of
 Divine vengeance is just at hand, and if there be
 not a general Reformation, we may fear, and that
 they too, a general Ruine; For Publick Judgments
 are the Banks and Shores, upon which God breakes
 the Insolency of Sinners, and by which he puts a
 stop to their proud Waves; he sends National
 troubles as the just Deserts of National Wicked-
 nesses. And does not deal with Publick Societies of
 Men as he does with single Persons, defer the Re-
 compence of their Doings till after Death; but he
 constantly reward or punish National Piety or
 as Wickedness even in this Life, it being the only
 Edomace in which it can possibly be done. Parallel to
 this is that saying of *Samuel* to the Children of
 Israel, 1 Sam. 12. 24, 25. *Only fear the Lord & serve*
him in truth with all your Hearts; for consider
what great things He hath done for you. But if ye shall
do wickedly, ye shall be consumed both ye and your
land.

And indeed the Sin of the Nation is the procur-
 ing cause of all the trouble that we either feel or
 fear; it is for that that our Heart is faint; for these
 things that our Eyes are dim, it is this, as we have
 seen, that has brought upon us this great
 sudden and surprizing Loss, I mean the Death of
 our Lawful King, the Restorer and Preserver of our Reli-
 gion and Liberties; and if we go on still to do wic-
 kedly, we shall most certainly bring upon our selves
 a worse and a far greater Loss; and

as God has depriv'd us of our King, so he will also strip us of all Spiritual and Temporal Blessings which now we enjoy: For while we are at Peace with Sin, we can expect nothing but the Wrath and Indignation of God against us; Nay we are told expressly in His Holy Word, *that the very Prayers of the Wicked*, (that is of such as are resolved to continue so,) *are an Abomination to the Lord.*

Let every one of us therefore take care to amend one; for that Publick Reformation which is necessary to turn away the Indignation of *Heaven* from us, and to prevail with God to establish and prosper the Government of the Queen, is a thing that must be begun by particular Persons. And let none of us be so foolish as to think, that Her Majesty's Health, or bare wishing Prosperity to the Nation, nor swearing that we are true Church men, or wishing Damnation and Confusion to the *French*, &c. that will make us either good Subjects, or able to oppose our Enemies. But they are the true Sons of the Church; and best Members of the State, who live up to that pure, that holy and undefiled Religion which is professed amongst us, that are the only Persons to be Instrumental in procuring a Blessings to these Nations; It is Sin, and nothing else that can bring down the Wrath of God upon a Land; and it is Repentance and a General Reformation, and nothing else, that can make us a flourishing and happy People.

Let us I say therefore, that God's Wrathful Indignation may be turn'd from us, and that the Loss of the King, may be made up in the long and Prof

ll also glorious Reign of our Gracious Queen *Ann*, and that
 blessings the Blessings of the Lord may Crown with Success
 Peace the Councils and Undertakings now under consi-
 Wrath deration ; let us shew the World that we do in
 ve are ruth and reality wish and endeavour the Defence
 e very of the Nation, and the continuance of, the Gospel
 solved in its Purity amongst us, by Repenting of and for-
 d. making our Sins, which has, and will be the only
 mend procuring cause of God's Wrath, and our Enemies
 neces- advantage over us, if ever they prevail.

from And let us all be very careful to maintain Peace among
 prof- our selves, being assured that Unity and Concord is the
 g that best way to advance Religion, and to maintain the pre-
 none sent Establishment against all Enemies and Opposers what-
 jefty's ever. And as we all hope to meet in Heaven at last, &
 ation, expect there to be happy with God in Peace and Love ;
 n, or let us have no difference about the way that leads thither :
 rench, But let our greatest Contention be for the future, how we
 abler can out-do each other for the publick Welfare; and who
 Sons can live most agreeable to the Rules of Christianity; and
 who who can bring forth the most Eminent fruits of Repen-
 Reli- tance.

e the And lastly, Let us rejoyce in the goodness of God, after
 Bless- so just Occasion of Grief, who has conferr'd on us a Bless-
 g else- ing we to little deserve.

upon Suppose the Daughters of the *Philistians* should Tri-
 refor- umph when it is told in *Gath*, that our mighty one is fallen,
 flou- yet they must be forc'd at the same time to acknowledge,
 al In among the *Heathen*, that the Lord has done great things for
 Loss- us, nor can we fail to Eccho from our grateful Hearts,
 Prob- Yea the Lord hath done grent things for us, whereof we rejoyce,
 erow- He hath graciously wiped the Tears from our Eyes, he has gra-
 ciously confirm'd to us the Advantages which we former-
 ly enjoy'd, and given us just reason to expect greater; &
 therefore we must take care that our joy and our grati-
 tude

rude be proportionable to the greatness of our Blessing
 have received; since to be coldly affected with so signi-
 ficant Merit, is the ready way to tempt God to withdraw
 who is wonderful jealous of his Darling Attributes,
 will not suffer it to be prostituted to the unthankful
 insensible. Let our Hearts then over-flow with gratitude
 and joy, and let us jointly express the true sense which
 we have, of the happiness we enjoy under her present
 Majesty, by Praises and thanksgiving to Almighty God,
 who is the giver of this and all other good Gifts, by ascribing
 him the sole Honour of it, and not vainly imputing it
 to any merit of our own, and by answering the end of
 all and all other his Mercies, in the purity and unblemish-
 edness of our Lives and Conversations: and by Loyal
 and cheerful Obedience to the Queen our Sovereign
 being the only Blessing that can Atone for the great Loss
 we have lately sustained by the Death of our Sovereign
 Blessed Memory: Let us follow the good and gracious
 Example of Piety and Zeal for Religion which she gave
 us: and by a hearty and vigorous Assistance of her, be-
 come with our Persons, and our Fortunes, for Compleating
 that great Work which is in so good a forwardness, and
 which she has engag'd so honourably since her coming
 to the Crown, and in so doing, who knows but God will
 turn the Death of the King, which our Enemies would
 render so dreadful and fatal to us, to our Advantage, and
 which this Heavenly Providence will most certainly do, if
 we will but repent of our Sins, and amend our Lives,
 if we still go on in doing evil, he will after the loss of
 our great and good King send us a worse, and a far greater
 Misfortune: And tho we are now laying our Great
 monarch in the Grave, let us not forget to lift up our Hearts
 and Souls to the King of Glory, but cheerfully submit our
 selves to his wise and unerring Providence, who certainly knows
 best what is most proper and convenient for all states and Kingdoms.
 what we may all do, God of his infinite Mercy grant. Amen.

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